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Elma L. Gordon
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CAIN AND PATSY;

THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THE POOR.

A STORY OF SLAVE LIFE.

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PREFACE.

THE main design of this little book is to show the effect of religious teaching on the dark minds of the slave children whose humble history is recorded. It will serve also to show in some measure what slavery itself is, as it exists in this Christian land. To every heathen nation we may send freely the whole story of the cross, but there is a portion of our own where Christ's declaration as to the object of his mission must not be proclaimed. "He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, *to preach deliverance to the captives*, and recovering of sight to the blind; *to set at liberty them that are bruised*, to preach the acceptable year"—the JUBILEE—"of the Lord."

God speed the day when no driver's lash shall echo over our fair plains, and when no sable mother's cry or bondman's wail shall rise from plantation or everglade, into the ear of Heaven, saying, "O Lord, how long!"

J. D. C.

CAIN AND PATSY.

CHAPTER I.

THE SLAVE CHILDREN.

It was a calm, bright sabbath morning. The pine groves whispered softly, and the great river murmured in subdued tones; the rich autumnal flowers sent up their fragrance as incense to heaven; the oriole and mocking bird darted from their downy nests, and took their flight upward, while they warbled their song of praise to the Lord and Father of all. Oh, how beautiful this earth which God

hath made and given to us for our dwelling-place! Surely, it speaks forth his omnipotence! For what short of almighty power could call so much beauty into being, and keep it in constant motion? Summer and winter; seedtime and harvest; the sun, the moon, and the stars which he hath made; the mighty seas and lakes and rivers; the hills, the valleys, and the forest; the mighty oak and the tiny flower, are all proofs of the love of our heavenly Father. If angels can gaze from their homes on high, must they not be amazed to see this glorious habitation marred by the sin and ingratitude of man? Earth brings forth enough for all, both man and beast; and yet, through the improvidence of some, and the cruelty of others, want reigns, and misery veils the faces which might otherwise look up, clear and trustingly, to the Giver of all our mercies.

Broad plantations spread out on either side of a noble southern river, and tokens of wealth and refinement met the eye. But it was wealth for the few bought by the poverty of the many; culture for the high at the expense of ignorance for the low; rest for those ever at ease through the burdens of the toil-worn. But God is the Father of all, and the voice of the poorest outcast reaches his ear and moves his pity. He giveth not all his mercies to one, but divideth them as he seeth fit. He may withhold earthly good, and at the same time give blessings which gold can not purchase; so that one who may, like Lazarus at the rich man's gate, be the object of pity or scorn below, will, by and by, be the honored and envied in that land where poverty and oppression are never known.

As we were saying, it was a bright

morning of the holy day. Two sable children walked, laughing and talking very gayly, through the stiff stubble of the cornfield, towards the bank of the river. There lay moored what was, in their esteem, more valuable than was Cleopatra's barge to her — an old leaky, flat-bottomed boat, covered with mud outside, and with green slime within. A shout of joy escaped them when they saw it rocking before them, and then commenced a race to see which could first leap into this, to others, most uninviting boat. Their sparkling eyes and ringing laughter told the joy of their simple hearts, as the girl, springing into it with a bound like that of a wild colt, cried out, "Ise beat you, Cain! Ise ahead o' yer dis yer time!"

"Dat's true, Patsy," replied Cain, in a good-natured, patronizing way, "dat's true; you's allers ahead ob eberybody I

knows. Der's heaps o' people would gib somethin' for yer quick fingers. Dar, chile, you take in de oars while I onties de boat." Patsy, not at all afraid of soiling her hands, grasped them, mud-laden though they were, and, as Cain sprang in, pushed off with vigorous effort from the shore, and they were soon floating down the stream, singing and laughing beneath a huge blue cotton umbrella, an heirloom which had come down to them, nobody knew whence, and through the rents of which the glad sun had free access to their uncovered heads.

CHAPTER II.

THE MASTER.

YEARS ago, when these poor children were very small, a negro-driver had bought them in Virginia, and brought them away from their mother's grave, to be raised for the cotton-fields of Alabama. They had forgotten almost every thing connected with their early home,—even the face of "mammy" had faded from their memories. But not so her humble teachings. They still repeated at night, from force of habit, a broken prayer, learned at her knee in a lowly cabin; they knew, imperfectly, passages of Scripture and snatches of devotional hymns, and remembered the name of

"mighty Jesus." This was all, and their minds were like their brows, dark as midnight.

"Massa was a mighty hard man," and all he cared for was to get the most work possible out of his hands. To accomplish this, he fed and clothed them well, nor would he allow them to be whipped, save when he thought it absolutely necessary. Thus the body grew and prospered, but the soul — alas! "massa" did not believe that man had a soul; so, of course, his own and those of his people were sorely neglected.

He thought that man was like the brutes that perish; that there was no heaven for the holy, no hell for the vile; that all beyond the grave was a long, unknowing sleep. Oh, shocking thought! who would die for ever, and lie in eter-

nal forgetfulness? This is a worse than heathen doctrine.

His plantation was "up river," and at quite a distance from any church or Sunday-school; so his negroes were as much shut out from a knowledge of Christ, and the way of salvation, as were their forefathers in the desert wilds of Africa. Now and then, a new slave would come to the plantation, who, perchance, had lived where the gospel was preached. Then, if a Christian, he would tell of the instruction he had received, and, if of a bold and daring spirit, might propose a meeting by twilight in the canebrake. But these attempts were invariably put an end to by the ungodly master. The thoughtful, if any such there were, buried their fears or hopes for the future, in their own bosoms, communing only with the Judge of the oppressed.

CHAPTER III.

THE TEACHER.

A PALE, feeble young man from a northern college had recently come to the neighborhood, hoping to regain health in the genial air of Alabama. A letter from a northern friend introduced him to the owner of Cain and Patsy, who, being fond of society, received him kindly, and soon became greatly interested in the young stranger; and he, being a faithful servant of Christ, resolved that the favor he had found in the eyes of the master, should be turned to some account for the good of the slaves, and for the honor of God. His company was soon found to be necessary to their enjoyment, and he

was urged to remain and teach the sons of his hospitable entertainer, for all saw that his qualifications were very rare, and his nature very lovely. The planter was a little surprised that the handsome offer he had made was not eagerly accepted. But an anxious expression passed over the face of the student when pressed to remain. "Is not my offer a very handsome one?" asked the gentleman.

"Yes, far more so than I could have expected," replied the student.

"You told me you were poor, and that you could remain at the South only by your own exertions; why, then, do you hesitate? Have we not treated you like a friend, sir?"

"Yes, like a son," answered the young man, "and the situation you offer me is one for which I have earnestly longed—ay, and for which," he added, solemnly,

"I have fervently prayed. Still, I dare not say I will stay with you."

"Why, sir?" proudly returned the planter.

"Because I dare not live in a house where there is no welcome for my Master. I dare not dwell beneath a roof where his name is not acknowledged, nor his blessing sought; where I could not speak of him and his doctrines to the inmates and the servants."

"Oh, ho," cried the planter, jocosely, "if *that's* all, we'll soon manage that. Although I don't believe in these things myself, *I'm very liberal* towards those who do. I let everybody express their own opinions, and claim the same privilege for myself. As to your 'Master and his cause,'" he continued, a smile of scorn playing about his lips, "you may talk about either to any one who will lis-

ten to you. But don't annoy me with it; that's all I ask."

"Sir," replied the young man, solemnly, "I see here daily three scores of my fellow-creatures, all of whom I certainly expect to meet again at the judgment-seat of Christ. If I pass them by without speaking of the claim which God has upon them, and of the duty they owe to others, how can I be guiltless? If I *believed* as you do, I should *act* as you do; but do you think that with my belief I could pursue the same course, and be an honest and consistent man?"

"I suppose not," replied the planter, "and I am willing to trust you among my people. I have confidence in you, and do not believe that you will teach them to hate me or rebel against me."

"Far from it," replied the student. "If I might have them together for an

hour or two on Sunday, I care not how many whites are present. I should simply teach them the story of the cross, and then their duty to God and to their fellow-creatures; to be sober, honest, faithful, and industrious."

"I don't care how much you teach them of such doctrines, for they need to be taught honesty; such a thievish set as they are! I have, however, said so much against Sunday schools and prayer-meetings, among the blacks, that I should not quite like to have them held on my own premises; but about three miles below, is a man who will welcome you, and give you a place to meet in. I will let some of my people go every Sunday. It shall be as a reward. I will give them a pass, if they work well;" and the rich man looked very wise, as he thought of this new way to get labor out of his people.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LESSONS.

THE planter submitted to this proposition of the young man, not because he felt less hostile than before to the gospel of Christ, but that he might secure a competent teacher for his sons.

How little did he know that he was then an instrument in the hand of him whom he denied, for carrying out his plans of mercy to that benighted people. He never dreamed that the holy One who ruleth in the heavens had a plan of operations, all plainly laid out, for his frail young servant, and that, first his illness, then his southern tour and recommendation to himself, were all important steps

towards the consummation of that plan. The young man would go, were it left to himself, to the distant heathen. But no, God had work for him in his own land. He laid his hand on him, lightly to be sure, but in such a way as made it not wise to go to Hindostan or the islands of the sea. God's eye of pity was fixed on this great family, his heart of love was touched for them, and there were yet promises to be redeemed there which had been made to the mother of Cain and Patsy, and received by her in faith. "God is not slack concerning his promises;" and the tears of that sable Christian, shed long ago, in a rude hut, upon a dying bed, had all been numbered and her broken cry of "Jesus, Massa! Jesus, Massa!" had entered the ear of the God of mercy, and now his time had come to redeem his pledge. The wicked

who scoff and revile are often used as instruments by the Almighty in carrying forward his work. God had here, then, two helpers — the unbelieving planter, and the earnest, faithful, and prayerful student. Both aided in the work, but only the *willing* servant received the reward.

A little outhouse was fitted up on a neighboring estate, and thither, on the sabbath, many slaves made their way. Most went only for the walk and the gossip with neighbors, whom they were seldom permitted to meet, rather than for worship. Some children, in bright cotton frocks, were "toted" along by "daddy and mammy," as a reward for picking more cotton-balls than usual; while not a few hoary-headed men and women, almost worn out, went to have the dream of religion which they brought

from "Kentuck" or "ole Virginny," "right smart time ago," refreshed in their memories.

But was there one real Christian in the dark group which pressed round the stranger in the rude sanctuary? It is true they were not taught to read or spell there; but it is one of the highest glories of the gospel, that the most ignorant can understand its plan and end. Our faithful young student began to teach these scholars as we should begin with an infant class. When he asked "Who made you?" nearly all answered, "God, massa; he made us." That much they had learned from each other. But when he came to ask, "Who is Jesus Christ?" there seemed to be more hesitancy. Some replied, "He's the good man;" but the question seemed to take most of them by surprise. "Did you never hear the

name of Christ?" he asked, mournfully, looking at an old negro who sat eagerly listening.

"Oh, bless you, yes, massa; heaps o' times. Massa Jim, our old overseer, used to talk a heap 'bout him; allus talked 'bout him when he swar!" The young man was grieved — for he saw that there were gray-headed men before him who had never heard of the sinner's Friend, save when his holy name was used as an oath! Was it not enough to draw tears from the eyes of one who loved our dear Redeemer, and was jealous of his glory? Then he began with the birth of the Saviour, and related his whole story in language so simple that a little child could not fail to understand it. The poor, benighted scholars sat in rapt attention, not taking their eyes from off the speaker's face, and listened, just as they were used to listening, half

credulous, to the tale of witch or fairy, by the light of the pitch-pine knot, on a winter's night. Some of the more knowing ones smiled, and looked at each other, when assured that all this suffering was endured for the love the Saviour bore to them. Was it any wonder they did not believe the marvelous tale which angels can scarce comprehend? They had never seen love like this — all the kindness they had ever received had been prompted by selfish motives. How could they believe that the King of glory had come down to die in agony for them, poor, ignorant black creatures that they were.

It was more than even their credulous minds could receive. "Ise heard dis yer story afore, massa," interrupted an old man, "but I never knowed it was *true* — does yer bleve it yerself, sar?"

CHAPTER V.

THE SWEET STORY OF OLD.

ONE day, when our young stranger was surrounded by his sable friends, who were learning to love him, and to appreciate his motives, he was talking to them of the crucifixion; and when he mentioned the two thieves, the eyes of poor Cain suddenly kindled, and he nodded and smiled at his sister, who seemed also greatly pleased.

"What is it, Patsy?" asked the gentleman, kindly.

"I knows dat ar, massa; Ise allus knowed that!"

"Oh, yes, massa," added Cain; "I didn't know it was *him* you meant afore;

we's heard 'bout him a heap. Our mammy that's dead and done, she knowed him. I didn't know as it was 'bout 'mighty Jesus' you was talkin'!" The teacher smiled and said, "It is a happy thing to *know* him, Cain; and although he died on the cross hundreds of years before your mother was born, yet she may have known and talked with him." And then he explained how, after his burial and resurrection, our Saviour rose to heaven, where he now sits at God's right hand, pleading for us. He told them how he loved and suffered below; and that the same heart which pitied and succored sinners when on earth, still beat tenderly for them above. So simply and so sweetly he talked, that the hour passed without wearying his hearers, and now and then, those hearts, all unused to sympathy, showed the

power their new friend had gained over them, by a silent tear or a smothered exclamation of wonder, "Dat's mighty good!"

When two hours had passed, the teacher knew that prudence required them to return to their homes. In a few affectionate words, he told them how much he had felt, and how much he had prayed for them, and that it was in answer to his earnest entreaty, that they were permitted to meet together. "I assured your masters," he said, "that the lessons I should teach, would not make you restless or unhappy at work, but rather, submissive and faithful. If this proves true, you will get permission to meet me every sabbath; if not, I can do you no good. All on earth have trials; I have mine, and you have yours; but the sorrows of the blessed Christ, of whom I

have been talking, were greater than all. Remember him at your work and in your cabins, and pray him to give you his spirit, that you may be able to follow his example." And then he shook hands kindly with each of his simple pupils, as they flocked around him. Some gazed in his face to make sure he was not of a new order of beings. One old man asked him "if anybody paid him for coming there and giving them sarmons;" and then they left the place with a rich theme for the next week's conversation. The remarks made by these American heathen, on their way home, would have surprised many of the Christian people in their own neighborhood; who, though they see no sin in holding slaves, yet consider it great sin to keep them in such ignorance of God and heavenly things. Those who love

Christ will talk of him to their servants; but those, who, like the planter of whom we are writing, despise him and his doctrines, of course, will never speak his name. They have no care for their own souls—how can they labor for the salvation of others? God pity the slave of an infidel master!

CHAPTER VI.

THE SEED GERMINATING.

ALTHOUGH poor Cain owned nothing,—not even himself,—yet the old flat-bottomed boat we have mentioned was by common consent considered his property. He took upon himself the care of it, and always kept it in repair, if it ever was in that condition. So if, on a holiday, any one wanted it for a sail, he asked leave of Cain. On the occasion referred to in the beginning of our story, although it was much nearer to walk over the fields, Cain had dipped the water out of his boat, put in a basket which he meant to fill with the fruit of the persimmon-tree which grows on the

bank of the stream, and, with his sister, set out for an excursion on his way to the Sunday-school. Neither of these children had any holiday attire, as none was provided for them, and they were too young to contrive means to get it themselves. So poor little Patsy, who was only twelve years old, had gone to the stream the night before, and "dabbled" out a tow frock for herself, and shirt and overalls for Cain, that they might have, as she said, "clean clothes," and look "right smart for Sunday."

In their haste to see the other children at Sunday-school, they concluded not to pick the persimmons till their return, and beguiled their way by singing snatches of cornfield songs, intermingled with lines of "mammy's *hymes*." Had you seen them,— Cain rowing with all his might, keeping time with his oars

to the music, and Patsy shading her ebony face beneath the old faded umbrella, — you would have wondered at their joy. Oh, this holiday was a rare blessing to these poor children of toil! Little can the pets of a happy home, for whose gratification holiday joys and May gatherings are planned, whose every want is anticipated, understand their delight.

A very different scene presented itself in the boat on its return. No sounds of merriment broke the stillness on the shore, no cornfield songs echoed from the pine-groves, and forgotten was the fruit they had meant to gather. Their talk was now of what they had just heard, and of their few faint memories of "poor dead mammy."

"Spose all dat's true 'bout Jesus — spose he can see into your heart and

knows what yer tinkin 'bout, Cain?" asked poor little Patsy.

"Yes," replied Cain, thoughtfully, "dat's true as de book; for now I comes to 'member, mammy allers said dat mighty Jesus could see *right through me*, an' I allers sort a half 'membered it, for when I swars, or hates de overseer, or stops pickin' de balls mighty quick, I sort 'o feels 'sef somebody was lookin' right through me and was angry wid me. Wish I knowed Jesus, and could *talk to him*, like mammy did. I 'members how she used to talk to him when I sleep in de cabin wid her and daddy. Daddy got *lost* somewhere — she neber found him. But both tell me mighty Jesus look right inter me, an' know what I tinkin' inside."

"Massy! Cain, if I thought dat's all true, I'd neber dar to make up faces to

blind Matty no more when she ax me to fetch a gourd o' water to her cabin; I would neber dar to say bad words *inside me*, when de master comes 'long wid de overseer, nor hide and go sleep under de cart, when I ought to be mighty peart a pickin'," said Patsy. "Well, I means to know more 'bout dis yer talk, for it would look mighty good to have somebody to love us and look kind and speak soft to us. I'll try how much cotton I can pick, and how good I can be dis yer week, to eberybody, so I can go next Sunday, and hear more 'bout 'mammy's Jesus.'"

"Dat's good chile, for it make me feel sore when yer do bad and gits whip;" said Cain, with the air of a guardian.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FRUIT.

DURING all the week which followed, these sable children talked and thought of the sabbath's teaching. They toiled hard, as if under the eye of Christ, and almost forgot that the overseer was by them. They strove against evil thoughts, and refrained from wicked words, and looked about them to see, as their young teacher had urged them to do, if there were some one whom they could aid. Patsy, who was not so good-natured as her brother, used sometimes to kick over a basket of cotton-balls for some weary fellow-laborer, against whom she had a grudge, or hinder her in some other way.

Then, not only would the innocent one, but she herself receive punishment. She was naturally very quick in her motions, and when she chose to work, could finish her task long before sundown. In this happy week, striving to do right, she did her own work, and then ran to the help of the feeble, or of those who had babies in the field to hinder them. Then, at night, she brought unasked, a gourd of water to the blind old Matty, and did many other little acts of love, which greatly surprised those who had been annoyed by her before.

Cain, too, although he had always been a faithful boy, and a great favorite, seemed all the time striving to help somebody out of trouble, and advised all the boys "to remember that it was more important to please Christ than to please the overseer; for he could only

punish them for a little while, but Jesus could cast them all off for ever," quoting the language of the new teacher.

So the weeks rolled on, and the blessed lessons were still given from sabbath to sabbath. The peaceful fruits soon showed themselves on the estate, and even the scoffing owner was obliged to confess that "his people were made better, and not worse, by their intercourse with the young stranger."

In several instances, the truth was greatly blessed, and a deeper work than that which showed itself was wrought. Among these highly favored ones were Cain and Patsy, who were now sober and faithful in all their duties. They knew but very little, and sometimes would ask strange questions in their ignorance, but still they seemed really to love Christ and strove to please

him in all things. We doubt not their ignorance was overlooked, and their humble efforts to love and obey accepted.

When the mild winter had passed away, the young teacher, with established health, returned to his studies; but he left behind him there witnesses for Christ who had "hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes." Long will the fragrance of that visit linger around the region, making the lowly toilers faithful and patient here, and leading to their reward on high.

Cain and Patsy made great proficiency in the six months of their school, and laid up, in their memories, a store of Scripture verses, which, as they could not read, were of more value to them than mines of gold. Cain would repeat his in his mind, and thus keep them

fresh; but his sister did all her thinking aloud. Often her fellow-laborers would hear her murmuring voice, as she stood among the cotton, repeating her lessons and making comments on them. Sometimes she would sing, in a sweet voice, some sacred song, to encourage and cheer them at their work. Always cheerful, always faithful, always seeking opportunities to do good to some one, is it any wonder that Patsy, once so cross and spiteful, should be loved by all the poor around her? When the sabbath came, she and Cain would withdraw from those who spent their day in merriment or in working their little garden patches, and seat themselves in the flat-boat at the shore, which was now their little "Bethel." Several of the older people went with them to hear the verses they repeated and the "hymes" they sang. Several times, the

sons of their master came down, and, amazed at the memory of these children, would read and teach them hymns and verses from the Bible. It was kind in these children, and they greatly enjoyed it themselves. It was indeed a happy little company which sat on the rough seats of the rude boat, and well might they be happy, for there was among them an unseen Guest, whose presence ever sheds light and peace around, let the darkness be never so deep, or the sorrow never so great. Jesus met the humble band, overlooked their ignorance, and smiled upon their efforts to learn of him.

While his spirit lingered there, it was no doubt absent from many gorgeous palaces built in his name. Often does he turn away from the worldly, the vain, and the unforgiving — clad, though they be, in scarlet and fine linen — as, with un-

holy motives, they enter the sanctuary; while he shows his heavenly face to the poor and despised who are of a meek and lowly heart.

If these two benighted children made such proficiency in holy things in a few short months, without any worldly knowledge, will they not rise up in the day of judgment, to condemn many who misimprove their golden hours in the sabbath school and in God's house?

"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required."

What would a long life of usefulness be to a highly favored child, compared to the sacrifices made by those poor, ignorant children in a few short months. Remember the toil-wearied Patsy, struggling to the spring nightly, with Matty's gourd, hastening through her task to help the weaker, and cheering with her

little hymns and verses the discouraged or impatient. Think of Cain, as he digs in lame Peter's little garden, or performs double work for a feeble slave, that he may spend an hour at rest. In view of their efforts to do good to others, what ought *you*, dear children, to do for Christ, and for the suffering around you? Their motive is love—love to Christ, which brings with it love to everybody, even to the stranger and to the enemy, should you be so unfortunate as to have one.

It will be far more tolerable in the day of judgment, for the benighted heathen or the ignorant slave, than for the child who, knowing his master's will, did it not.